

## Message Text

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71

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12

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COME-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 DHA-02 /099 W

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P 171953Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7394

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

USSOUTHCOM

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA

AMCONSUL CALI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, PINT, ELAB, PINS, CO

SUBJECT: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY. IN A WELL ARGUED LETTER BY FINANCE MINISTER BOTERO, THE GOC ASKED THE U.S. TO SUPPORT HIS APPLICATION FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP IN THE OECD. IF REPORTS OF CHILEAN WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ANDEAN PACT ARE TRUE, LOCAL CRITICISM OF COLOMBIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PACT MAY INTENSIFY. THE LIBERAL PARTY MADE FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD SETTLING INTERNAL DIFFERENCES. THERE WAS NO PROGRESS, HOWEVER, TOWARD A SETTLEMENT OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY DOCTOR'S STRIKE. SCATTERED VIOLENCE OCCURRED, ESPECIALLY BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN BOGOTA WHO SEIZED ON THE DOCTOR'S STRIKE ISSUE TO INDULGE THEIR APPETITE FOR DISORDER. THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY DEFENDED THE USE OF MILITARY JUSTICE ON CIVILIANS DURING STATES OF SIEGE AND FOR SPECIFIED OFFENSES. END SUMMARY.

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2. COLOMBIA APPLIES FOR OECD MEMBERSHIP. THE GOC HAS

APPLIED FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP IN THE OECD. IN A LETTER TO SECRETARY SIMON REQUESTING U.S. SUPPORT OF THE MOVE, FINANCE MINISTER BOTERO POINTED OUT THAT SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE OECD DO NOT DIFFER SIGNIFICANTLY FROM COLOMBIA IN GNP OR LEVEL OF INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THAT THE ACCEPTANCE OF COLOMBIA, AS A LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRY, WOULD BE A POSITIVE STEP IN ESTABLISHING A PERMANENT DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIAL NATIONS AND THOSE OF THE THIRD WORLD.

3. CHILEAN WITHDRAWAL FROM ANDEAN PACT. REPORTS THAT CHILE HAS DECIDED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ANDEAN PACT WERE FEATURED PROMINENTLY IN THE PRESS THIS WEEK, BUT THUS FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL REACTION. IF THE REPORTS ARE TRUE, THEY MIGHT PROVIDE ADDITIONAL AMMUNITION TO THOSE COLOMBIAN BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF COLOMBIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PACT. SUCH CRITICISM, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT SHAKE THE GOC'S ADHERENCE TO THE PACT.

4. PROGRESS IN LIBERAL PARTY UNITY DISCUSSIONS. LEADERS OF THE SEVERAL LIBERAL PARTY FACTIONS CONTINUED TO MAKE PROGRESS THIS WEEK IN THEIR UNITY TALKS (BOGOTA 9226). THEY AGREED TO CALL A MEETING OF LIBERAL CONGRESSMEN SEPTEMBER 20 TO RATIFY THE BASICS OF AN ACCORD WHICH: (A) SUPPORTS THE SEPARATION OF THE CONGRESSIONAL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS BEGINNING IN 1978, THE FORMER TO BE HELD THE SECOND SUNDAY OF FEBRUARY AND THE LATTER THE FIRST SUNDAY IN JUNE. THIS IS IN LINE WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ' CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY PROPOSAL; AND (B) PROVIDES FOR A PARTY CONVENTION AFTER THE CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION, TO NOMINATE THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE WHOSE SLATE WINS THE GREATEST NUMBER OF CONGRESSIONAL SEATS. THIS LAST POINT MAY YET PROVE TO BE STUMBLING BLOCK TO PARTY UNITY, SINCE FORMER PRESIDENT CARLOS LLERAS, CURRENTLY IN EUROPE, HAS PREVIOUSLY STATED THAT THE CANDIDATE SHOULD OBTAIN AT LEAST 40 PERCENT OF THE PARTY'S VOTE IN THE CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, LLERAS' ARCH FOE, JULIO CESAR TURBAY, FAVORS AN UNSPECIFIED PLURALITY SINCE HE BELIEVES IT FAVORS HIS CANDIDACY.

5. SOCIAL SECURITY DOCTORS CONTINUE STRIKE. SOCIAL SECURITY (ICSS) DOCTORS, ON STRIKE SINCE SEPTEMBER 6 (BOGOTA 9226), LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTINUE TO RESIST GOC EFFORTS TO GET THEM BACK TO WORK. SURPRISINGLY, THE STRIKE ITSELF HAS BEEN FREE OF VIOLENCE (ALTHOUGH STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE STRIKE WERE NOT. SEE BELOW) AND PATIENTS APPEAR TO BE RECEIVING CARE THROUGH AN AD HOC ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN OTHER GOVERNMENTAL HOSPITALS AND PRIVATE MEDICAL FACILITIES. PRESIDENT LOPEZ, SPEAKING ON NATIONWIDE TV, APPEARED TO BE CONCILIATORY. HE SAID THE DOCTORS HAD NO REASON TO STRIKE SINCE HE HAD NOT

YET APPROVED THE ACTION OF THE ICSS BOARD OF DIRECTORS, TAKING AWAY THEIR RIGHT TO BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY. HE ASKED THE CONGRESS FOR EXTRAORDINARY POWERS TO REORGANIZE THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS, AND TRANSFERRED CONTROL OF THE ICSS FROM THE MINISTRY OF LABOR TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH ON AN INTERIM BASIS. WHILE GENERALLY WECOMING THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVES, THE DOCTORS WANT A GUARANTEE THAT THEIR RIGHTS WILL BE RESTORED AND THAT THEY WILL NOT BE PUNISHED FOR STRIKING. THE PRESIDENT SUBSEQUENTLY RATIFIED THE ICSS BOARD'S ACTION AND THE DOCTORS VOWED TO FIGHT ON. SO FAR IT LOOKS LIKE A STAND-OFF.

6. SPORADIC VIOLENCE. NEARLY 150 PERSONS WERE ARRESTED IN BOGOTA AS A RESULT OF A SERIES OF VIOLENT STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS ON 14 AND 15 SEPTEMBER. THE DEMONSTRATORS BLOCKED TRAFFIC NEAR THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, BURNED SEVERAL VEHICLES AND STONED POLICE PATROLS. THE CLASHES, IN WHICH AN UNDISCLOSED NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND 11 POLICE WERE INJURED, WERE INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT FOR THE SOCIAL SECURITY DOCTORS' STRIKE. VIOLENCE ALSO CONTINUED IN THE ISOLATED REGION OF URABA IN NORTHERN ANTIOQUIA. THE COMMUNITY OF SAN PEDRO DE URABAB WAS ATTACKED IN BROAD DAY-LIGHT ON 10 SEPTEMBER BY NEARLY 100 GUERRILLAS OF THE COLOMBIAN REVOLUTIONARY FORCES (FARC, PRO-SOVIET). THE GUERRILLAS WERE FINALLY DRIVEN OFF BY THE LOCAL POLICE DETACHMENT AFTER THEY HAD LOOTED SOME STORES AND THE AGRARIAN BANK. ELSEWHERE IN URABA, A PUBLIC PROTEST IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ARBOLETES ON 14 SEPTEMBER OVER THE LACK OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES SUDDENLY TURNED VIOLENT. BEFORE CONTROL WAS REESTABLISHED EIGHT POLICE HAD BEEN INJURED AND TWO OTHERS HELD FOR SEVERAL HOURS BY THE DEMONSTRATORS. MILITARY REINFORCEMENTS RESTORED CALM TO THE MUNICIPALITY BY NIGHTFALL.

7. ARMY COMMANDER DEFENDS MILITARY JUSTICE. IN A WELL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REPORTED SPEECH, GENERAL CAMACHO LEYVA, COMMANDER OF THE ARMY, DEFENDED MILITARY JUSTICE AS APPLIED TO CIVILIANS DURING PERIODS OF STATE OF SIEGE AND CALLED FOR MEASURES WHICH WOULD BROADEN ITS USE. SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE LONG COMPLAINED THAT CIVILIAN COURTS OFTEN OVERTURN SENTENCES OF MILITARY TRIBUNALS ON MERE TECHNICALITIES. THERE IS AT PRESENT A POSSIBILITY THAT A CIVILIAN COURT WILL FREE SEVERAL CIVILIANS WHO WERE CONVICTED BY A COURT MARTIAL FOR THE ASSASSINATION OF GENERAL RINCON IN SEPTEMBER 1975. (75 BOGOTA 8597). THE RINCON CASE, HOWEVER, DOES NOT SUPPORT CAMACHO'S THESIS SINCE IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED IN COLOMBIAN CIRCLES, INCLUDING THE MILITARY, THAT THOSE CONVICTED BY THAT MILITARY COURT WERE INNOCENT. SANCHEZ

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